

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 003876

R 140645Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4238
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 5359

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS, PFOR, TU, GR
SUBJECT: FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL'S COMMENTS ON SAILING OF THE
SISMIK I

REF: ANKARA 5356

1. NEAR THE END OF STAFFDEL BRYEN/RICHARDSON'S MEETING WITH
FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL EVENING JULY 13 SUBJECT OF AEGEAN DISPUTE
WAS RAISED. AT THAT POINT CAGLAYANGIL PRODUCED A LARGE
MAP OF THE AEGEAN WHICH SHOWED EXPLORATION LICENSES GRANTED
BY BOTH GREECE AND TURKEY IN THE AEGEAN. APPARENT PURPOSE
OF SHOWING THIS MAP WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT GREEKS HAD
BEEN MUCH MORE EXTREME THAN TURKEY IN GRANTING LICENSES FOR
EXPLORATION IN THE AREAS OF THE AEGEAN FAR FROM ITS LAND
MASS. IT ALSO SHOWED OVERLAP IN AREAS OF EXPLORATION
GRANTED BY BOTH COUNTRIES.

2. CONVERSATION THEN TURNED TO THE OPERATIONS OF THE
SISMIK (NEE HORA). CAGLAYANGIL MADE THE POINT THAT HAD
BEEN MADE TO ME ON JULY 9 BY SECGEN ELEKDAG: WHAT THE
TURKS PROPOSE TO DO IS SIMPLY SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION OF
THE TYPE THAT GREECE HAS ALREADY DONE. GREEK OBJECTIONS
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TO TURKISH ACTIONS CONSTITUTE A CLAIM OF GREEK SOVEREIGNTY

OVER THE WHOLE AEGEAN AND ARE THEREFORE UNACCEPTABLE. HE THEN MADE A SECOND POINT. HE SAID THAT THE DISPUTE BETWEEN TURKEY AND GREECE INVOLVES THE DELIMITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF. HE NOTED THAT THE SISMİK WILL SAIL ON THE SURFACE OF THE AEGEAN AND WILL IN NO WAY AFFECT THE CONTINENTAL SHELF. HE ALSO SAID THAT IF THE SISMİK WERE TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN DRILLING OPERATIONS HE COULD UNDERSTAND GREEK CONCERN, BUT IN VIEW OF WHAT THE SISMİK PLANNED TO DO -- AND HE SAID ITS RESEARCH CAPABILITIES ARE "VERY LIMITED"-- HE COULD NOT COUNTENANCE GREEK OBJECTIONS.

3. AMONG THE PRESS OF EACH COUNTRY THERE WERE WARMONGERS, CAGLAYANGIL MOTED. HE SAID THAT STORIES IN THE GREEK PRESS HAVE ASSERTED THAT IF THE SISMİK SAILS INTO THE HIGH SEAS OF THE AEGEAN IT WILL BE SUNK. COUNTER-REACTIONS IN THE TURKISH PRESS HAVE ASKED RHETORICALLY IF THE AEGEAN IS A GREEK LAKE. THEY POINT OUT THAT OTHER SHIPS OF OTHER FLAGS AND TYPES CAN SAIL IN THE AEGEAN AND ASK WHY THE SISMİK CANNOT.

4. CAGLAYANGIL THEN SAID NSC HAD MET ON THE SUBJECT EARLIER IN THE DAY (JULY 13) AND "TURKEY IS DETERMINED TO SAIL THE SISMİK IN THE AEGEAN. IF THE GREEKS TAKE SOME KIND OF ACTION, WE WILL TAKE EXACTLY THE SAME ACTION. IF THEY SINK THE SHIP WE WILL SINK A SHIP. IF THEY ATTACK A SHIP WE WILL ATTACK A SHIP." I INTERRUPTED TO ASK WHERE IN THE AEGEAN THE SISMİK WOULD BE SAILING. CAGLAYANGIL SAID IT WOULD SAIL INITIALLY IN TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS AND LATER IN HIGH SEAS. IT WOULD NOT SAIL IN GREEK TERRITORIAL WATERS. I SAID THAT WHILE I COULD PERHAPS UNDERSTAND THE LOGIC OF THE GOT POSITION I WAS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED OVER THE RESULTING POTENTIAL FOR AN INCIDENT IN THE AEGEAN. I ASKED WHY, WITH ALL THE PROBLEMS THERE WERE IN THE WORLD AT THE MOMENT, DID TURKEY WISH TO RISK ANOTHER BY SENDING THE SISMİK INTO POTENTIALLY DISPUTED AREAS. CAGLAYANGIL ANSWERED IN ENGLISH, "I AM NOT PROTECTOR OF THE GREEKS. ASK CARAMANLIS. IT (THE SISMİK) WILL BE ON THE HIGH SEAS."

5. WHEN I ASKED WHAT DATE THE SISMİK WOULD SAIL, CAGLAYANGIL
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SAID HE DID NOT KNOW BUT PREPARATIONS ARE CONTINUING AND IT WOULD BE SOON. I AGAIN REVIEWED WITH CAGLAYANGIL THE POSITIONS WE HAVE TAKEN BOTH IN ATHENS AND ANKARA. I EXPLAINED THAT WE WERE COUNSELING RESTRAINT ON BOTH SIDES. WE WERE ASKING THE TURKS NOT TO TAKE A PROVOCATIVE ACTION, AND WE WERE ASKING THE GREEKS NOT TO BE EASILY PROVOKED. CAGLAYANGIL INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT THE GOT WAS NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY PROVOCATIVE ACTION; IT WAS SIMPLY GOING

TO SAIL A CIVILIAN SHIP ON THE HIGH SEAS. THE TURKS WOULD TAKE NO BELLIGERENT ACTION UNLESS ATTACKED. BUT "IF THEY ATTACK WE WILL NOT SAY EXCUSE ME AND LEAVE." IN RESPONSE I ASKED CAGLAYANGIL TO WEIGH TURKEY'S INTERESTS IN THE SAILING OF THE SISMİK AT THIS TIME AGAINST THE POTENTIAL DAMAGE THIS COULD DO (IF IT LED TO GUNFIRE) TO THE PROSPECTS FOR PASSAGE BY THE CONGRESS OF THE NEW SECURITY AGREEMENT. THE LATTER I SUGGESTED WAS OF MUCH LARGER AND MORE IMMEDIATE IMPORTANCE TO THE GOT AND I QUESTIONED THE WISDOM OF PURSUING A LESSER ACTION WHICH MIGHT JEOPARDIZE IT.

7. CAGLAYANGIL SAID HE UNDERSTOOD MY POINT AND IN A MARKED SOFTENING OF HIS DEMEANOR HE STATED TURKEY WOULD TAKE NO PROVOCATIVE ACTIONS AND THE SISMİK WOULD "MAKE NO DEMONSTRATIONS NEAR GREEK ISLANDS." HE ADDED SUCH ACTIONS WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND THAT TURKEY WOULD NOT DO SUCH THINGS SIMPLY FOR SHOW.

8. THIS PORTION OF THE DISCUSSION WAS CARRIED ON IN THE PRESENCE OF STAFFDEL RICHARDSON. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, STAFFDEL LEFT AND I HAD A PRIVATE MEETING WITH CAGLAYANGIL (WITH ONLY MFA DIRGEN FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS YAVUZALP ALSO PRESENT). AFTER WE HAD DISCUSSED ANOTHER MATTER (SEPTEL), CAGLAYANGIL RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF THE SISMİK. HE SAID HE NEEDED MY HELP TO CONVEY TO ATHENS AND TO WASHINGTON ALL THE POINTS HE HAD MADE JUST A FEW MOMENTS EARLIER ABOUT THE RIGHT OF A SHIP LIKE THE SISMİK I TO ENGAGE IN INNOCENT, PEACEFUL, SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION EITHER IN ITS OWN TERRITORIAL WATERS OR ON THE HIGH SEAS. HE THEN SAID THAT I COULD ADD IN MY REPORTING HIS ASSURANCE THAT THE GOT "WILL BE VERY CAREFUL" WHERE THE SHIP ACTUALLY GOES.

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9. CAGLAYANGIL NEXT SPELLED OUT HIS PERSONAL VIEW THAT THE CONTINENTAL SHELF ISSUE OBVIOUSLY HAD TO BE COMPROMISED THROUGH NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE GREEKS AND TURKS. HE SAID THAT WHILE TURKEY RESERVED ITS VIEWS WITH RESPECT TO THE INVIOABILITY OF THE ANATOLIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF, IT WAS RIDICULOUS TO CARRY ITS ANATOLIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF CLAIMS TO THE POINT WHERE GREEK ISLANDS WOULD END UP WITH NO CONTINENTAL SHELF AT ALL. IT WAS EQUALLY RIDICULOUS, HE ADDED, TO HAVE THE GREEK ISLANDS HAVE SUFFICIENT CONTINENTAL SHELVES WHICH WOULD CUMULATIVELY PRODUCE THE OPPOSITE RESULT, I.E., TO HAVE ANATOLIA ITSELF END UP WITH NO CONTINENTAL SHELF. WE HAVE A SUI GENERIS PROBLEM HERE, HE SAID, AND WE NEED A SUI GENERIS SOLUTION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONTINENTAL SHELF, TERRITORIAL WATERS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, SEISMIC PROSPECTING, AEGEAN, SISMIK I R/V, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ANKARA05359
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760271-0971
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760761/aaaacbqb.tel
Line Count: 169
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 ANKARA 5356
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL'S COMMENTS ON SAILING OF THE SISMIK I
TAGS: PLOS, PFOR, TU, GR, (CAGLAYANGIL, IHSAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006